

# ENVIR 100: INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

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Pronouns: she/her/hers

## Course Description

Introduces environmental studies through examination of ethical, political, social, and scientific dimensions of environmental issues. Integrates knowledge from different disciplines while evaluating environmental problems at various scales. Uses an environmental justice lens to examine the ways problems are concentrated in some communities while providing opportunities to practice environmental communication and collaborate across disciplines.

Designed as an introduction to environmental studies, this course will provide a survey of the latest science and ideas related to the environment and our role within it. We will frame our perspective with the premise that addressing environmental and social challenges involves applying and connecting knowledge from many fields, including economics, political science, demography, biology, earth sciences, history, philosophy, law, humanities and more. Because environmental challenges often occur over large spans of space and time, resolving environmental issues requires a holistic understanding of environmental and social processes at local, regional, and international scales, and within a historical perspective. Because impacts from environmental degradation are not born equally in all countries or communities and in fact disproportionately burden vulnerable communities, we will connect the importance of redressing environmental justice and social equity in resolving environmental problems. This course offers an introduction to all the above – to environmental studies, broadly conceived.

You will be asked to integrate material from many different academic disciplines and apply those insights and methods to actual problems, at scales from the local to the global. You will have the opportunity to discuss and debate ideas with faculty and peers through online interactions. Your learning will be evaluated with exams, short writing assignments, quizzes, a team project, and participation in weekly team asynchronous discussion sections.

As a culmination of the course, you will present a team project in the ENVIR 100 Poster & Multimedia Symposium. Online, this will be a gallery of posters and multimedia presentations demonstrating synthesis of your learning in this class. We will use the tools of today's online communication channels to practice advocacy in our increasingly interconnected world.

Taking this course online will allow you to practice essential digital communication skills that you will undoubtedly continue to use in your future relationship with these issues, either professionally or simply as an active, engaged citizen of Earth.

## Course Objectives

After this course, you should be able to:

1. Recognize that the complexity in environmental problems requires us to work from a variety of disciplines and perspectives- to understand the science, history, and cultural context behind the problems and how individuals and societies respond to those problems.
2. Demonstrate content knowledge around environmental issues facing our planet and explain trade-offs in addressing environmental issues through personal, political, cultural, or technological solutions that range in scale from local to global.
3. Illustrate how impacts from environmental degradation are not borne equally in all countries or communities. Provide examples of the ways that negative environmental impacts disproportionately burden vulnerable

communities by race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. Connect the importance of redressing environmental justice and social equity in resolving environmental problems.

4. Practice environmental communication and critical thinking skills, through peer engagement, iterative writing assignments, a team project, and a public poster or multi-media presentation.

## Grading Policies

You are evaluated on the quality of the following assignments:

Assignment	Percentage
Exams (Weeks 4, 7, 10)	30%
Discussions	10%
Section Work	10%
Outside Seminar Paper	10%
Persuasive Essay	20%
Group Poster or Multimedia Presentation	20%

Late assignments (turned in without prior approval) will incur sanctions of 10% for each day late. For example, an assignment handed in on the due date after the appointed time will incur a late penalty of 10%; an assignment turned in three days after the due date will incur a penalty of 30%. An assignment turned in ten days late incurs a penalty of 100%. As such, we do not accept assignments later than nine days after the due date. Small assignments designed to help you prepare for class (e.g. online discussion or work due in class) as well as work scheduled to be presented or performed in class are not accepted late. This policy is flexible only in emergency or medical situations or, *with advance notice of excused absences*. Absences excused with advance notice may include: University-mandated absences, legal commitments, medical reasons, family need or emergency.

## Assignment Descriptions

The following descriptions are only summaries; for precise instructions and requirements, please consult the course website (Canvas) for examples and rubrics.

Exams – There are three exams in this class, which will be held online as Canvas quizzes. The exams will cover material from lectures, readings, interactives, section work, and discussion. There will be a combination of multiple-choice and short-answer questions. The exams will be at the end of week three, week six, and week nine.

Discussions – Weekly discussion assignments ask you to evaluate and reflect on course content as well as to respond to your peers' contributions. Your comments and responses should show critical thinking and cite reading or ideas from our course. These are typically 2-3 paragraphs. Full credit includes answering the prompt thoughtfully and referring to texts from our class with page numbers and quotes, as well as your personal response to these ideas or texts. Additionally, you must respond to other students' ideas in a way that extends the conversation – asking a question, answering a question, sharing ideas.

Section Work: Section work will often be discussions – in person for students enrolled in synchronous sections or online via Canvas discussions for students enrolled in asynchronous sections. Section work will also sometimes include additional work to create or measure. Each week's section work will be different but there will be good details in the assignment descriptions.

Outside Seminar Paper – This is a one page paper connecting an environmental documentary or lecture to ideas from our course.

Persuasive Essay. This four-page paper is individual work but forms the basis of the group poster or multimedia presentation below.

- The persuasive essay must identify an environmental issue of personal concern and use an evidence-based argument that supports why the issue merits attention. You must discuss its direct and indirect causes, explore the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of the issue, and provide a solution designed to address it.

Group Poster or Multimedia Presentation –The group poster/multimedia assignment is the final assignment of the course and is designed to represent the culmination of your efforts in ENVIR 100. You will work extensively with your group to develop a poster or multimedia offering that synthesizes your collective individual topics. These will be displayed in an online gallery during the last week of course.

## Course Expectations

We each enter this course with a unique set of experiences and backgrounds. That is part of our strength as a learning community. Respect for diversity of all kinds—in terms of race, ethnicity, age, sex and gender, sexual orientation, ability/disability, educational background, nationality, immigration status, political and ideological belief, and so on—is vital to creating a respectful, safe, and stimulating intellectual environment.

We may disagree with one another from time to time. You may disagree with the views of another student or with our views as faculty, or we may disagree with your views! That’s an important and beautiful part of scholarly and scientific discourse, as long as we can listen openly to others' opinions and respond to them respectfully.

In this class, we expect you to:

- Be respectful of other students at all times and in all ways.
- Be responsible for your own learning. Full participation in online teamwork in your Sections is vital to this! It will be very hard to make-up work should you fall behind.
- Think critically about the readings and lectures. This class will be challenging and will demand that you think at a deep level.
- Be engaged in each section and on the discussion board: ask questions, answer questions, and offer your point of view. We want to know what you think. Research suggests that students learn more from interacting with their peers than from listening to their professors.
- Give us feedback! Please tell us what you think of the class and the things we are discussing. How can we better support your learning?

You can expect us to:

- Do everything we can to engage you and to assist you in learning. We are available to you outside of class time via email, discussion board, office hours, or individual meetings. We look forward to working with you.
- Respect your contributions. Please talk with us if you have suggestions for ways that we can better facilitate your learning.
- Thoughtfully assign the readings and assignments necessary for you to understand the material presented in class.
- Present material so that it is accessible and understood by students with different learning styles. • Provide robust resources online including all your readings and lectures, review pages with every module, a discussion board, and an online gradebook. We believe these resources will help you engage with the material and more easily assess your own learning.
- Grade fairly and provide helpful feedback

## Students with disabilities

If you would like to request accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disability Resources for Students (DRS), 011 Mary Gates, (206) 543-8924, (206) 543-8925 (TTY). If you have a letter from DRS indicating you have a disability that requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to the instructor so we can discuss the accommodations you might need for the class.

## Academic Honesty

Be advised, the instructor of this course will notify University Conduct committees about any suspected student misconduct. If you are found guilty of academic misconduct you may receive a 0 on the assignment in question. It is your responsibility to inform yourself of what plagiarism means - visit the College of the Environment web site: <http://coenv.washington.edu/intranet/academics/academic-policies/academic-misconduct/>

## Email and computer use

All students are expected to have an email address and you will receive email relevant to this course on a regular basis; it is your responsibility to check your UW email at least once a day. If you regularly use another email address, please have your UW email forwarded to that address. There will also be a Canvas class website on which students will find a course schedule, periodic postings of grades, and reference materials. Lastly, class work will be peer reviewed, submitted and graded electronically so Internet access is a must.

## Religious Accommodation

Washington State law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at Religious Accommodations Policy (<https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/>). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the Religious Accommodations Request form (<https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/>).

## Course Topics and Readings

- All readings will be assigned on Canvas

Week	Topics
0	Introduction
1	Anthropocene, Human Population
2	Consumption, Waste, Sustainability
3	Conservation Ideas, The Environmental Movement, Justice
4	Biogeochemical Cycles, Water and Nitrogen Cycles, Food Systems
5	Carbon Cycle, Climate Change, Ocean Acidification
6	Energy, Environmental Ethics
7	Biodiversity
8	Environmental Economics, Environmental Law & Governance, Global Environmental Change
9	Environmental Psychology, Environmental Education, Sustainability in Action

